

Message

From: Newton, Cheryl [Newton.Cheryl@epa.gov]
Sent: 10/15/2021 2:25:50 PM
Subject: Acting RA Weekly (Sent to All R5)

Dear Region 5,

This week we received the exciting [news](#) that Region 5's RA has been appointed. As many of you have read, Debra Shore is an elected member of the Board of Commissioners of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago. She will be joining us soon, and I am excited at the opportunity to work alongside her. We've been chatting on ensuring a smooth on-boarding, and how to best support Debra's ability to step right in. I very much appreciate all the work many folks are doing in finalizing a Region 5 overview "book" and current hot issues. It has been an honor to serve as the acting Regional Administrator for the last 9 months and I thank all of you for what we've been able to accomplish together. I know we will continue to do great things together with Debra's leadership.

I wanted to give you a quick update on our work regarding Benton Harbor. This week, we had an important conversation with Michigan EGLE and DHHS on our scientific understanding of lead-reducing filters and their effectiveness. This morning we continued our Agency discussions on options for additional data collection/studies to confirm and further inform this body of filter science. Michigan announced important additional commitments with regard to Benton Harbor yesterday, including a goal of replacing the lead service lines within 18 months. I look forward to our continued work with our HQ colleagues, state, and local partners to address lead in drinking water concerns in Benton Harbor and elsewhere.

We are also continuing to work closely with Indiana IDEM partners regarding the U.S. Steel Midwest plant in Northwest Indiana. Later this morning, we'll be having a multi-media brainstorming session with IDEM to discuss ideas for engaging U.S. Steel from a broader perspective, in addition to the current compliance assessments.

In other program news, Region 5 is nearly finished with its cleanup of the debris from the 5th Street fire in Calumet, MI that happened back in May. Check out this local news [interview](#) with On Scene Coordinator, **Brian Kelly (SEMD)**, talking about the cleanup efforts of the asbestos containing debris and air monitoring being done to ensure that the surrounding community is not being exposed to the asbestos during the cleanup. This is a good example of the everyday work that gets done across the Region by our SEMD colleagues.

Last week the Administrator shared EPA's [Climate Adaptation Action Plan](#), pursuant to President Biden's [Executive Order 14008](#). The plan lays out several climate adaptation priorities for the Agency to implement in the coming months and years. In addition to the plan, the Agency also launched a new [Climate Adaptation web page](#) which will serve as a hub for climate adaptation resources.

Speaking of the Climate Adaptation Action plan, we are actively working on a regional plan and on Thursday, Water Division led the discussion at our monthly 411 on efforts to build the Region's Climate Adaptation Plan. In fulfillment of President Biden's Executive Order 14008, a cross-divisional team has been established to determine priority actions, establish a climate vulnerability assessment, assess science needs, and identify other components of the Region's plan over the next several months. OA's Senior Advisor Joel Scheraga was a special guest who walked us through the Agency's draft Strategic Plan commitments, and the connections being made in EPA's budgeting and regulatory efforts to support integration of climate considerations. I'd like to thank **Ryan Graydon** and **Candice Bauer (WD)** for coordinating and leading the discussion, as well as the members of the Climate Adaptation team, including: **Saphique Thomas (ARD)**, **Monica Dix** and **Brooke Furio (ECAD)**, **John Haugland (GLNPO)**, **Sarah Gruza (LCRD)**, **Carole Braverman (LSASD)**, **Rebecca Iversen (MSD)**, **Robert Thompson (ORC)**, **Tom Short (SEMD)**, and **Kara Belle (TMPO)**.

A few months ago, I shared the news that ORD and the Regions have been working together to improve ORD's collaborative research programs through a kaizen event to integrate the Regional Science RARE, RESES, and Innovation Programs. This week we received the news that, thanks to the work of a multi-Region team including **LSASD's George**

Schupp and **Carole Braverman**, the new integrated program is expected to launch by the end of the month. The Regional ORD Applied Research Program (ROAR) will combine the best of each program and streamline the proposal development process. Be on the lookout for the program announcement, which will include links for informational webinars. In the meantime, Carole is available to answer questions.

Hopefully you saw the email sent out earlier this week from Tera Fong regarding the event ***Suicide is Preventable: Helping Others in a Time of Crisis*** on October 26 hosted by the Office of Civil Rights, the Veterans Employee Program, the Persons with Disabilities Employee Program, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Suicide is a sensitive and often stigmatized topic. This event is can provide helpful information and open the conversation about mental health and emotional struggle to reduce the stigma. Special thanks to **Kirstin Safakas (ORA)** and **Marcel Ritchey (SEMD)** for coordinating this event.

I am sad baseball season is over so soon in Chicago; hopefully there is more to come with this talented White Sox team. Lots of other sports to watch, including the Chicago Sky, Bulls, Blackhawks and perhaps a newly interesting Bears team! Fall has definitely arrived and perhaps here to stay. Have a safe and enjoyable weekend!!

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